



Gum Tips

Quarterly Newsletter of the
Koala Hospital Port Macquarie

June
2010



Seaview Farida



Koala Preservation Society of NSW Inc.

PO Box 236 Port Macquarie
NSW 2444 Australia

Licensed to rehabilitate and release sick, injured and
orphaned native fauna under licence no. 10044
National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

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Seaview Farida

This feisty little female koala came into the hospital in August 2009 as a result of a **dog attack**. Farida had horrific wounds to her right hand and forearm which caused a “degloving” of the skin and flesh of the hand. The injuries were so bad that Port Macquarie Veterinary Hospital’s surgeon, Chris Livingston, had to remove the ends of two digits (the central ones) as they were beyond saving.

Farida’s recovery was slow and somewhat painful, not helped by the fact she had a bit of an “attitude” and was not the easiest patient to treat! The healing process was similar to a burns injury in that the skin regrowth came from the edges of the wound into the middle of the site.

In a wound such as this, the appropriate adjunct to treatment would have been daily massage and physiotherapy to keep the digits working, prevent contracture and for the skin to be supple and elastic. This became an impossibility with this wild little female who would not have a bar of such a thing. Sedation was the only way and obviously it was not something that could be done for a long period of time.

Although Farida’s skin eventually healed well, she was **struggling to use the damaged hand** and we considered requesting permanent status for her. Then one day we noticed she was attempting to “grab” with this hand, so we decided to try a small tree and see how she went. To everyone’s amazement, she immediately climbed right up the top and that’s where she stayed – there was no way Farida was going to let us treat her any more! From there, we pushed Farida a bit more and let her go in Yard 9 where she climbed even bigger trees. At this point, we decided Farida was definitely a release option.

The problem was that her home range wasn’t exactly prime habitat AND was full of dogs. Instead, as Farida was a fit, healthy young female with a big breeding future in front her, we decided that she would be an ideal candidate for the **RTA radio tracking program**. The beauty of



Farida's hand mid-treatment/healing.



this arrangement was that, by radio-tracking Farida at the new site, if she got into difficulty we would have the opportunity to bring her back to the Hospital. See the article on the “Koala radio tracking program” for more information on this wonderfully tool.

So far Farida has rewritten the koala release textbooks – she has not only climbed well but has covered a fair bit of country at our radio tracking site, and has now established herself in a prime bit of thickly vegetated koala real estate. Every time Farida sees any of the tracking team, she bolts up the tree in an effort to get away from us as quickly as she can, so we can only suppose she is happy where she is!

Seaview Farida has amazed us all with her tenacity in recovery and her feisty fighting power. Hopefully, she will produce lots of tough little koalas to re-populate the area where the RTA koalas are and, boy, we can tell you they will be strong and invincible just like their mother!



TUNING INTO THE KOALAS

via the radio tracking program

Just what is this radio tracking program that Seaview Farida has become a part of? Radio tracking of wildlife is an excellent scientific tool that has been used for many years to observe and learn where wildlife go in their daily journeys.

Researchers can get good information from observing behaviour, diet, shelter requirements and simply the amount of country they traverse. All of this data can be recorded with the aid of radio tracking equipment or radio telemetry (its more correct term). Locating an animal such as a koala in thick bushland where trees can be 60-80 metres tall is almost impossible without the help of this radio telemetry gear.



The koala wears the antennaed collar (above) without a problem.

The animal under observation wears a collar that houses a transmitter and a small antenna. Most animals tolerate these collars very quickly and tend to go about their daily business totally unaware of this vital piece of scientific equipment around their necks. The transmitter is powered by a lithium battery that lasts approximately 12 months. Most researchers would re-capture the animals well before this date to check the fit of the collar, especially on young animals who may outgrow their collars during this period. If an animal is to be tracked longer than 12 months, then they would simply be recaptured, assessed and a new battery fitted and then released again.



The tracked koala's number is visible on the left of the receiver.

The researcher doing the tracking carries a receiver, which is a small, box-like device worn over the shoulder or hanging off a belt. It has a special antenna connected to it, similar in appearance to a small

television antenna. To the observer, the tracking operator

looks to be walking around holding an antenna above their heads, alternately peering down into the receiver and looking high up into the trees to search out the tracked koala.

The collar transmitter gives off a set frequency that belongs to that individual collar. The operator "tunes" in the number on the receiver that corresponds to that frequency and, provided they are working within the maximum range of around 3km) the receiver emits a beeping sound. The further away the animal is, the weaker the beep. The closer the animal is to the transmitter, the stronger and sharper the signal will become.



Cheyne, picking up the signal of the koala called "RTA Cheyne-o". On a warm day, this area is buzzing with millions of vicious mozzies!

TUNING INTO THE KOALAS

When a koala is located, the tree is taped off and the GPS location and tree species recorded. This gives the trackers quick identification of where the koala is likely to be next time, with confirmation that the koala repeatedly uses this tree as part of the home range.

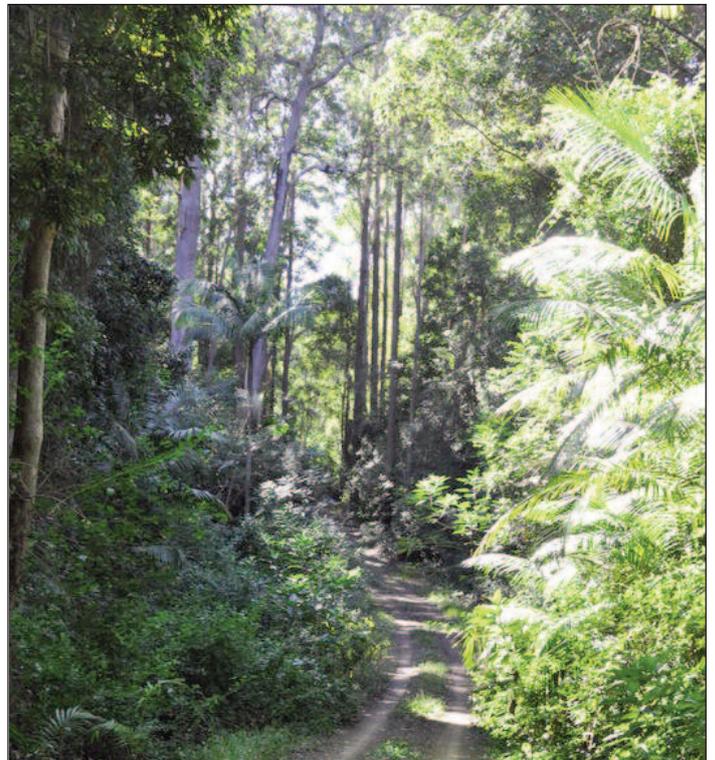
Once the tracking project is completed all the data will be collated showing the koalas movements over the entire time period. This will be not only scientifically important data but will be very interesting and useful information for future work. We will keep everyone posted on this!



Ross emerging from the lantana/weed infested area just above where RTA Clayo had established himself. How these koalas make their way through this tangled mess is amazing!



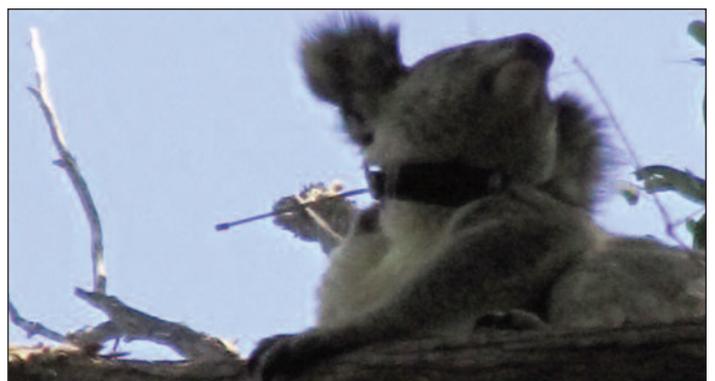
Michael picking up RTA Clayo's signal below the track in a gully full of swamp mahogany trees, choked with lantana and finally ending up down on a boggy, "cutty" rush swamp full of melaleucas, leeches and other assorted nasties. Hard going for the team!



It wasn't all weed infested country – there are certainly some picturesque spots. This is not far from where RTA Clayo decided to settle in – he certainly chose prime real estate with water views!



Ross and Cheyne in "the other melaleuca swamp" which shows lots of evidence of both feral pig and feral deer activity. Koala RTA Stevo's signal was reasonably strong, but still way ahead of us.



RTA Simono equipped with her collar and antenna about 60m up.

via the radio tracking program



When a koala is located, the tree is taped off and the GPS location and tree species recorded. This gives the trackers quick identification of where the koala is likely to be next time, and confirmation that the koala repeatedly uses this tree as part of the home range. NB. a tree in the background taped off previously – this koala RTA Stevo has really established himself well here. Both taped trees are tallowood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*) a prime food tree species for koalas.



The mozzies at the site are the size of F111 bombers and the leeches are pretty hungry. Michael found a leech on his belly which bled profusely. Mostly we found leeches in our shoes!



Ross (below) checking the global positioning system (GPS) location of the tracked koala. Sometimes the thick tree canopies made it difficult to pick up the satellite. (Don't know whether looking in the sky for the satellite helps Ross :)))

Seaview Farida (above) trying the vanishing act early on in the tracking program. The rest of the koalas either sat there and ignored us completely or were so high up they were hidden from view. Farida always seemed to be "mid-way" up a tree when we first located her, but as soon as she saw us she would scamper up so fast it was amazing. There is no way she wanted to have anything to do with us humans!



Historically (prior to logging) this area was a pristine forest that had some giant trees. Here are Michael and Ross inside a stump.

"My new furry friends"

Emma Gifford volunteered at the Koala Hospital during the month of March.

Westhaven Barry, Lighthouse Chubby Cheeks, Birthday Girl, Settlement Point Bea – these are just a few of the new friends I made while volunteering at the Koala Hospital and, yes, you guessed it, they are of the grey and furry variety! Not that I didn't meet wonderful people also.

My stay as a volunteer was one of the most enriching experiences I have ever had. Everyone, humans and koalas alike, were so welcoming and it was so great to know everyone was there embodying the same spirit. The ultimate goal, of course, is to care for these koalas so that they may return healthy to their home ranges.

I had many a surprise during my five week stay at the Hospital and learnt loads; for example, I was surprised to learn that koalas occasionally eat dirt! I was to learn they do so occasionally for the extra nutrients it provides. I already knew koalas were fussy eaters, but they sometimes turn their noses up at the leaf they're supposed to like. I tried not to take it personally after all my hard work carrying and cutting the branches!

Mostly though, in my experience, they knew when the fresh leaf was arriving – probably due to their keen sense of smell. So they became quite animated (for a koala that is). Barry and Chubby Cheeks especially grew impatient if I didn't put leaf in their pots fast enough and tried to climb my hand and arm to get to their feed! On only my second day, Barry helped initiate me by hooking a claw into my hand. It wasn't deliberate, he was just impatient!

I was surprised by the prevalence of Chlamydia within the koala population and glad that research is continuing at the University of Sydney. My heart was warmed at the fighting spirit of the koalas; koalas like Seaview Farida, who continued to climb despite being attacked by a dog leaving her hand deformed. She was released back into the wild during my stay.

Another battler is Oxley Kaylee, who against all odds, climbs the trees in her yard despite a leg

amputation. Phenomenal! There is also little Settlement Point Bea, the joey who may have suffered slight brain damage after falling from her mother's pouch. She is as alert and adorable as one can stand.

Let's not forget Birthday Girl who is defying all odds at the ripe old age of 23. She is believed to be the oldest koala in the world (the average age is 15) and yet she still has a sparkle in her eyes. That's not to say she doesn't need a helping hand from time to time. In my second week, I had just finished feeding her formula and was talking to the visitors when she slipped off the horizontal post of her gunyah and was hanging upside down by the tips of her claws! The visitors gasped and Cheyne

rushed over and gently placed her the right way up, much to the delight of both Birthday Girl and the crowd of visitors watching. Normally koalas can right themselves but at her age and with arthritis, there's no harm in a bit of a helping hand; she's earned it.

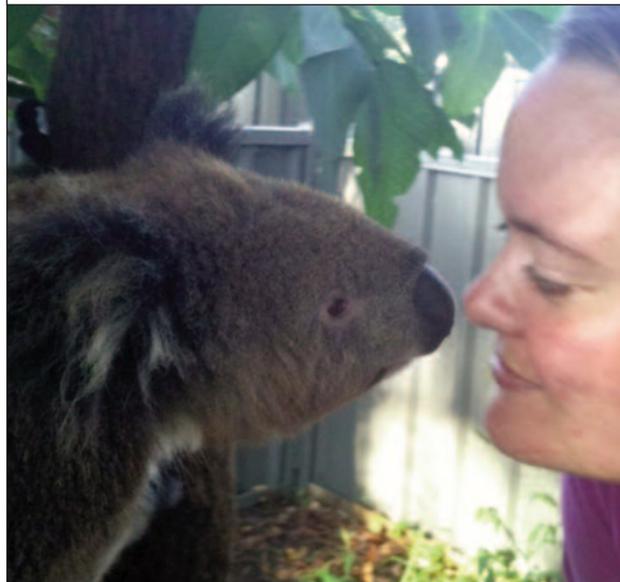
It's true that koalas sleep a lot and that their expression and body language are subtle, but I never would have imagined the individual personalities koalas can possess. Some are more grumpy than others, some seem to have more expression, some leap playfully from tree to tree, some are a lit-

tle more reserved and others are very inquisitive and investigative.

More than once I said out loud, "I'm not a tree to climb" to a koala who was eyeing me with adventure! Lighthouse Chubby Cheeks is one of the more inquisitive ones whoe and would follow me around with her eyes and head as I went ahead with my yard work, probably hopeful that it was feeding time. Chubby Cheeks certainly lives up to her name!

I was fortunate enough in my third week to accompany staff to the release of Waterlily Sweetpea. I had been watching her progress during my stay and to see her climb out of the basket and scamper up a tree in the wild was the best feeling

Emma and Westhaven Barry share the love.



to have, I can admit to having a tear in my eye. I had to laugh though when Peter had to give her a gentle pat on the behind to encourage her up the tree! It's so exciting and rewarding to find that another koala had been well enough to go home and I'm sure even more so for the workers who have followed each individual's progress from rescue to release.

No sooner is one koala released that another is admitted. Volunteers are never without something to do, whether it's yard work, feeding, laundry or setting up the intensive care unit for another koala's arrival. I attended the set up for a rescue of Hamlyn Daniel, a male koala who had been hit by a car. He was too far up the tree so we set up a barricade around the base of two trees and placed a trap with some yummy leaf. He was brought in the next day with nasty facial wounds but I was glad to see after a week or two he had his mouth stitched up and looked much better.

Even on my last day at the Hospital, an older female koala was brought in who had been sitting at the bottom of a tree for three days; very unusual behaviour for a koala. She was very dehydrated and so she was given a special electrolyte formula and some Nicholii leaf, which she was more than happy to munch on. She was also grinding her teeth which is a sign she was in pain. It turns out she was Banjarra Kelly, a patient at the Hospital 10 years ago when she was only a few years old. It's lucky she found herself in the best place she could be in with staff that will do everything in their power to help this little one.

The Koala Hospital provides such a vital service to the koala population in Port Macquarie and surrounding communities. Habitat loss means car

accidents and dog attacks are two of the most common reasons for injury or death. I found during my stay that these incidents and the infection of Chlamydia (wet bottom) were the most common reasons for koala admission.

From rescue to release, the Hospital not only provides a safe haven and medical attention for the koalas but also imparts education to the public including a 'walk and talk' where people can see the koalas and hear their stories. Many times I had people watching me feed Barry, Matt and the yard 10 gang and asking me questions. One such question I got regularly was, "where IS Matt?" One I would ask myself repeatedly until I looked up...and up. Not even the lure of me showing him the food tin would get Matt down if he was having a good sunbake! Though he also liked to sunbake on his gunyah flat on his belly!

I'm going to miss my new furry friends immensely, from Birthday Girl with those big brown eyes, the cheekiness of Bea, the very handsome Matt who chased me round and round his yard one day (I did try to tell him I couldn't give him his formula until he was still!), the ever hungry and delightful Chubby Cheeks and cantankerous Barry! You know though, I think I won him over in the end, even getting a nose to nose kiss from him on my last day!

To all the wonderful people at the hospital who put up with my questions and me putting my hand up for rescues and releases with excitement like a little kid; for the generosity shown to me and for making me feel so welcome, I can never thank you enough. My experience was an unforgettable one. I have only one complaint: it had to end! Perhaps a move to Port Macquarie is on the cards! *Emma*



Education report

Since the last General Meeting in February, the Education Team has hosted 21 coach tour groups as well as two speaking engagements to groups away from the Hospital. One such group was the Port Macquarie Garden Club who have since taken out two adoptions and will be keeping a donation box at each of the Club's monthly meetings with a view to further involvement.

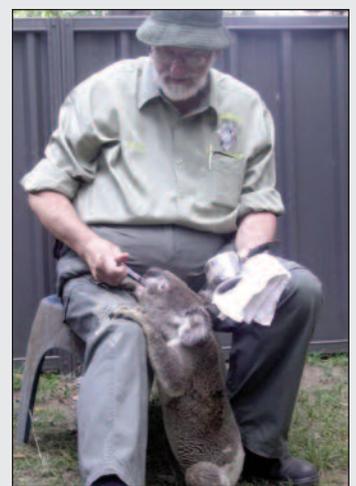
We were also involved in the Hospital Open Day in March and the Port Macquarie Volunteers Expo at Panthers Club on 6 May.

Walk and Talk numbers were very good throughout the last School Holiday period. My thanks to the team members who

pitched in to provide two guides for each day, a total of over 30 shifts.

Having Settlement Point Bea in her little "Bea Hive" is great for the Walk and Talk visitors, not to mention having the three juveniles in yard 6.

We could really use one more Walk and Talk guide to assist during those times when our regular members are off on holidays, otherwise all is going to plan in the Education field.



Geoff and Oxley Griffin.

Geoff Best Education Co-ordinator

Maintenance report

- ⇒ Two steel benches fabricated and installed in habitat yard (now know as the 'igloo'.)
- ⇒ Coarse gravel removed from area outside kiosk and crusher dust laid – hopefully more user friendly. How it performs during heavy rain remains to be seen.
- ⇒ Projector screen in Ed Shed has been moved towards left side and back closer to wall on a trial basis.
- ⇒ Barrier with gate installed outside yard 10 to prevent public access.
- ⇒ Architrave fitted to inside of door of office enclosure.
- ⇒ Floor area of storage shed cleared and concrete floor drilled, treated and plugged by pest controller. Ongoing repair to shelves and treatment by maintenance team required - failing this steel framing should be fitted.
- ⇒ The retrieval of forks and runners from RTA site proved unsuccessful. The main reason being was OH&S requirements to enter site.
- ⇒ Leaking of rainwater along bottom of wall at front of Ed Shed has been noticed. This is causing mildew to creep up wall. We expect to seal this next Wednesday. Re-painting of damaged area may be needed.
- ⇒ Ongoing repair and replacement of runners and forks in yards and ICU.

Brian Westoby Maintenance Co-ordinator



Chlöe 'dopts' Parkwood Lili

My friend Sheridan runs Golden Retriever Rescue in NSW. Sheridan was so impressed with the adoption program she asked her granddaughter, Chlöe, if she would like to adopt a wild koala. Chlöe chose Parkwood Lili.

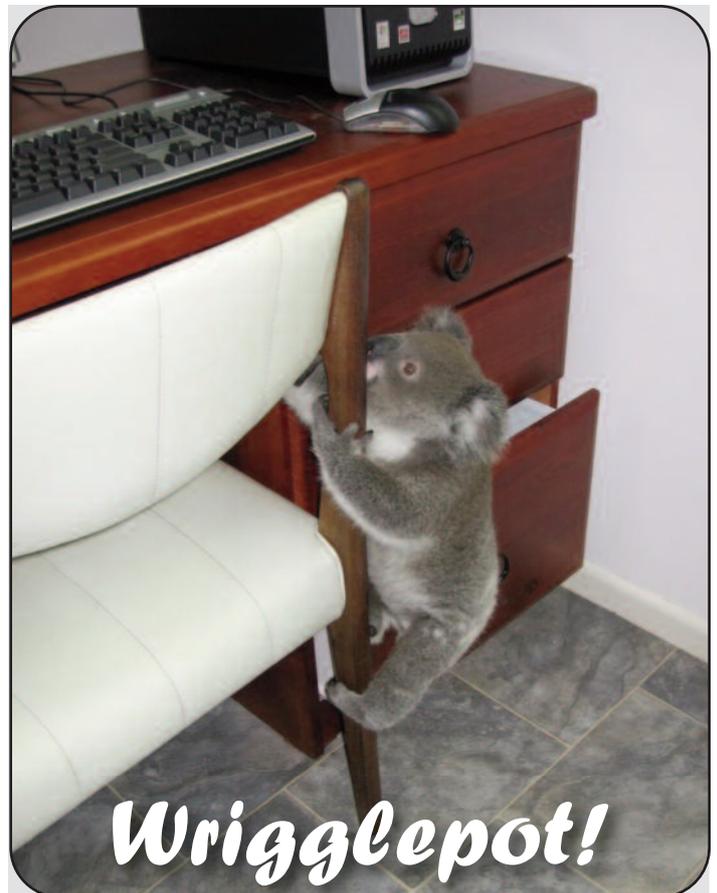
Chlöe has just started preschool and all the kids in her class get the opportunity of bringing in something special to them and telling the other kids about it. Sheridan explained to Chlöe how adopting a koala would help other koalas in the koala hospital to get well so that they can go back to the bush and live their life. Sheridan also explained that Koalas were not bears even though everyone thought they were.

Chlöe took her certificate and toy koala to preschool and this is what she said:

This is Lili and I dopted her. Lili is a koala but not a bear and dopting Lili helps other koalas go back to the bush where they belong.

The teacher was very impressed that Chlöe had remembered the story and said she thought the koala adoption, with the certificate and newsletter, was an excellent idea that would help instil in children the idea of protecting animals in their natural environment from an early age.

Marilyn Lees



Wrigglepot!

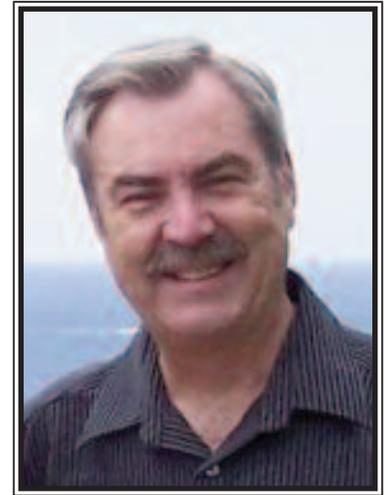
This is "Wrigglepot" (officially named Wilga Adler). He was found at the base of a tree in August 2005, weighing 596 grams – we don't know what happened to his mother.

We had him at home for 18 weeks and on 22 December, weighing 2.670 kg, he went back into the Koala Hospital prior to being released.

I named him Wrigglepot because that is what he did – he was a great one for wriggling when trying to feed him.

Joyce Westoby

From the President



In the last twelve months, the Koala Hospital has worked closely with Victorian Authorities during the Bushfires, to assist with the rehabilitation of rescued koalas.

We also worked closely with the RSPCA in their effort to rehabilitate exhibited koalas and we are currently assisting Dr Stephen Phillips with displaced koalas due to the local highway realignment.

Milicia McCosh, our recently appointed Ecological Consultant, has made an impression on our local Council, ensuring developments have input from the Koala Hospital.

Thanks to our faithful volunteers who put on a fantastic 'Open Day' to showcase the Hospital to the community and raise much needed funds at the same time; thanks to Robyne and Friends.

We also support special events such as the Ironman event held again in Port Macquarie. Brian Crisp and some of our volunteers manned the Finish Line Aid Station and later served refreshments and meals to

grateful competitors recovering from their physical exertion. It is important to be seen as part of the community.

Brian has also taken on the responsibility of manufacturing and distributing donation boxes to local businesses. He must be a good talker because he can't keep up to the demand.

Sam Carroll, our extraordinary *Gum Tips* editor, is also responsible for setting up our computer network; obviously she is a glutton for punishment. Sam recently came on board as our IT coordinator, thanks Sam. I should also mention that Sam ably assisted Helen Meers in preparing our submission for the Mid North Coast Tourism Award for ecotourism, which we won.

The day to day responsibilities are still there waiting for us 365 days a year. So I must thank each and every one of our volunteers for their commitment to our koalas; they work for our koalas tirelessly under Hospital Supervisor Cheyne's direction. Also a special thanks to the

members of the management committee for their continued support and the Coordinators for their incredible commitment.

This year the Jean Starr Foundation Award was presented to Hazell Sellers for her exceptional devotion to KPS. She not only is the Kiosk Coordinator but assists the Treasurer, keeps an eye on the Koala Sightings program and has just been elected as Secretary of the committee.

Special thanks to Beth Gabriel who was secretary for two years and has stepped down for health reasons, we'll miss you Beth.

Bob Sharpham **President**



Breakfast is served by Keith to Westhaven Barry. Photo: Gerry Walsh.

"I entered this photo in a competition organised by the Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre seeking images of volunteers at work.

The photo shared first prize in the 'Open Competition' section.

The Volunteer Awards were made as part of Volunteers Exhibition Day at Panthers Auditorium, on Thursday 6 May 2010."

Gerry Walsh

Supervisor's Report



Admission numbers have been average with a spike in numbers in February due to the RTA and RSPCA koalas. Dog attack numbers were actually lower until a very disappointing run over the last 10 days where we have had three young females with pinkie joeys all attacked and killed (in two cases, it was two dogs doing the attacking). That means a loss of six koalas from the population. We do a letterbox drop after a dog attack to alert nearby residents that these problems occur – plus we did a television interview about dog attacks recently.

Personally, I feel the only way dog attacks can be curtailed to fine dog owners, whether the koala is out on the street or in their backyard. Motor vehicle admissions have been slightly lower. We also have not seen as many cancerous conditions over the last year either which is good.

The **University of Sydney drug trial** results that have recently been released have shown that a lot of the drugs given to koalas are not getting to their targeted areas. Unfortunately, this will mean we will have to revise some of our management strategies of **koala disease treatment** and rehabilitation protocols until further research uncovers better ways of administration of medications. The implication of this work is huge for koala rehabilitation across the country. We emailed these findings to as many other wildlife groups as possible with some understandably shocked responses!

We received a phone call and a letter from the NSW Legislative council inviting us to submit to the **NSW parliamentary inquiry** (on 5-6 July) into the RSPCA removal of koalas from the Waterways Wildlife Park in Gunnedah. As everyone knows we have been unable to speak due to the legal issues involved and this inquiry will be wonderful as we will be able to finally speak the truth of what occurred on the 3 February this year and be able to publicly support RSPCA over the whole issue. For readers that do not know, we treated and cared for eight koalas removed from this park, with one being euthanased in late February. Five were returned in late April in good health and two were returned last Thursday, also in good health. Hopefully once the inquiry is over and the findings are released, we can all just get on with the business of looking after wildlife!

For those that were not at the General Meeting last weekend, the **radio tracking program** overseen by Steve Phillips and RTA is going exceptionally well. The majority of the koalas are doing as

predicted and have formed really good home ranges. A couple of the young males have ended up in less than first-class country, but that is typical behaviour of young males. One koala, RTA Clayo, headed south very early on in the piece. We thought he was going to end up in Bonny Hills! He has settled in a mosquito- and leech-ridden swamp which is not the best area to track in.

Our tracking team now have a pretty good grasp of the radio tracking equipment and we cannot wait to start tracking some of our long term patients released back into the Port Macquarie township. It will be very interesting to see how they cope with possible loss of their home ranges.

It would also be of great value to track some of the CBD koalas such as Garage Girl, who is often seen round St Thomas's church, the court house or right in town itself. Her data will provide information about how these urban koalas cope. Once the RTA radio tracking program is finished, the data will be collated and a scientific paper written up and hopefully published in a few scientific journals which will be great. All being well, this program will become the foundation for a protocol of release and translocation of koalas for across NSW.

The more we understand about the social structure and **social hierarchy** of koala populations, which is so easily evident in radio tracking studies, the better we will be at releasing our patients, and when forced to relocate adults through loss of habitat, the more successful this outcome will be with this knowledge onboard. We will be able to retain all of the radio tracking equipment which amounts to around \$10,000.

We recently received another wonderful **ultrasound machine** donated from Toshiba and Mid North Coast Diagnostic Imaging. It is a much more current model with lots of whistles and bells, a very clear picture and is a real treat to use. We are also still going to be doing a joint presentation on koala ultrasonography at the next World Ultrasound Conference which I believe is next year.

In around four weeks' time, I will have been employed as the hospital supervisor for 10 years. Over the last decade, there have been many major changes, not only to the supervisor job itself, but to the overall infrastructure and running of the Hospital. We have gone from a small termite-

infested building, six intensive care wards, a cupboard-sized treatment room that was basically just an overgrown corridor and minimal outside yards, to a major structure, with a treatment room most vet surgeries would love, eight intensive care units, and 33 outside yards. The job has certainly been very interesting over the last 10 years and I have worked and continue to work with so many amazing people who I have the greatest respect for. Unfortunately there were some dark periods but thankfully they are in the past now.

Many years ago, the supervisor worked only a few hours a day, with the majority of the decision-making of the koalas treatment and release being done by the then management committee. A lot of the actual treatments, pathology, etc, were done by the Port Macquarie Veterinary Hospital.

Life certainly changed with the koalas' treatment and release becoming the responsibility of the supervisor under the authority and guidance of the Port Macquarie Veterinary Hospital. **Ultra-sonography** was introduced in December 2000 at the hospital after a lot of scouting was done for a donated machine from Excelray in Sydney. Sonography of koalas has grown to become an essential component in diagnosis of a number of koala problems, particularly chlamydia.

Chlamydia swabs have been tested at the hospital since 2001 – prior to this they went to Kempsey Hospital and we had to wait 7-10 days for results which was a pain. We do a lot of our own pathology work now at the Hospital too. We have been able to sedate koalas for procedures since the end of 2000 rather than having to take every animal requiring sedation to the vet surgery. Now we can anaesthetise them fully with our own anaesthesia machine under the authority of Port Veterinary Hospital, which is even better. We also now have a lot more equipment than years ago – and a nice big treatment room to store it all too.

Protocols for treatments have improved greatly as well as the use of **superior medications** over recent years. We are able to administer pretty serious painkillers these days, be more proactive with IV and subcutaneous fluids, administer oxygen therapies (especially for motor vehicle and dog attack patients) and treat koalas in ways we were not able to many years ago. The major benefit is

that the koalas receive immediate attention on admission especially when time is critical.

Acknowledgement of this major change must go to **Chris Livingston**, our veterinary superintendent, who has been so patient with my hair-brained ideas and his ongoing confidence in our abilities at the hospital. Chris and his team are a major cog of the Koala Hospital team and they are worth their weight in gold to us (see page 14).

The Hospital is now recognised throughout Australia as a **training organisation** for wild koala rehabilitation with ongoing requests for us to put on training workshops throughout NSW and Victoria. We were asked to go to Victoria to do both triage and rescue work in the 2009 bushfires; it was a great honour to assist them. We are called to teach TAFE students, undergraduate veterinarians and wildlife carers, so all of this is a big feather in the Hospital's cap.

Our **burns protocol** is recognised as the protocol for burnt wildlife in the wildlife rehabilitation community, and our Koala Rehabilitation Manual has been sold throughout Australia and internationally. We now have a well qualified and well experienced bushfire rescue team. And we now have a radio tracking team (see page 3). Our supervisory team are not only well experienced and well qualified, but also very capable, level-headed people who work extremely well together without conflict. This also applies to our wonderful team leaders.

It seems that we have really come of age and have grown over the years into a highly respected professional organisation and this has come from the 37 years of knowledge and experience which we can attribute to the pioneering work of Jean and Max Starr without whom this Hospital would never have existed.

It will be very interesting to see where the next 10 years will take us in **our work with the beloved koala**. For me, I think at the end of the next 10 years my hair will be so grey I will just look like a koala. By then, it might be time to hang up my stethoscope, dust off the Winnebago, grab the other half and head over the mountains to start a brand new journey checking out what the world has to offer.

Cheyne Flanagan Supervisor



Photo: Kylie Biltris

Kiosk report

I am happy to report that the Kiosk has increased its turnover this year from \$67,000 to \$88,000, thus adding to the profits of the KPS.



I am extremely well supported by those on roster. Carol who collates visitor numbers, Margaret who produces weekly figures, Patsy who is learning sightings input, then there is Gwen, Anne, Lisa, Kay, Kristen, Robyne, Shelia, Noelene, Maree, Sue, Tracy, Richard and Ashley, all constant members of our weekly roster. Not forgetting Chris Abrahams, who has had her own battles this year but has found time to attend and support us.

These people each day from 8am til 4.30pm., welcome visitors give them information about our facility and koalas, besides encouraging them to support the hospital by purchasing from the kiosk. They have done this for 364 of 365 days of the year; we had a day off on Christmas Day. Congratulations, you are a great team.

I also thank Jack, who each week attends Sunday markets and promotes the hospital as a FREE destination and raises funds by selling goods from the kiosk.

The kiosk promotes Australian Made goods and it is commented that we have the best prices in town, so come along and find out for yourself or join our team.

Hazell Sellers Kiosk Co-ordinator

Adopt-A-Wild-Koala report

We have processed 702 adoptions from January to end March. Of this total, 364 were for Australia and 338 overseas, and there were 195 renewals.

Seaview Farida progressed very well despite our initial fears for her climbing ability, and she was released early in March.

Settlement Point Bea has now become a permanent resident of the Hospital and has been set up in a new yard, which has been given the name of the "Bea Hive". Her progress will be monitored over the coming months. Should she reach a stage where we believe she will be able to survive in the wild, her release may become an option.

Adoptions staff managed very well during my absence and we are all now back on deck.

Lorraine Best AAWK Co-ordinator



Friends of the Koala Hospital

Well we have been busy since the last report came out, we have been to the Laurieton markets where we have had raffles, and given out info on our furry friends .

We have also been getting a lot of feed back about sightings which is always a positive.

Sat 3 April We held our annual Easter Open Day to which was very successful and we are looking forward to our next Family Fun Day on **2 October**, so put that date in your diary; it is the October long weekend.

Thu 6 May Kevin & Geoff attended the Volunteer Expo at Port Panthers and talked about the Koala Hospital and volunteering. We also ran a raffle.

Fri 25 June, 4.30pm I have organised a fashion

parade at the Blue Illusion shop at 1/17-19 Horton St, Port Macquarie. Come along and enjoy a glass of bubbly and some nibbles and enjoy the fashion parade. 20% of the takings are donated to the Koala Hospital, so come along and support us and have some fun.

Wed 7 July We will be on town green supporting NAIDOC week. We would love to see you there.

Brian Crisp, our Donation box co-ordinator, has many new boxes out there doing well. People have been ringing in and asking for boxes for their premises, which is a sign that they are being noticed.

Until next time cheers,

Robyne Leadbeatter Friends Co-ordinator

Media & Comms report



Local media

- Once again the local media supported us with our Open Day.
- *Prime* did a story on our challenge to see if Birthday Girl has any takers for the oldest koala in Australia and included a promotion for Open Day. Mark Strachan also gave us a plug on his Leisure Report.
- Star FM included an interview with Mark.
- *The Independent* featured a story on Open Day.
- *The Express* ran a story on "Links" (thanks Milicia) and mentioned Open Day as well.
- 2Way FM have invited us to do a story on the Koala Hospital.

National media

- *Wander Magazine* (campervan/motor-home club) included the KH in its article on GPM. A rally will be held in PM in October.
- Australian Geographic Outdoor Magazine is possibly visiting the KH next week.

Overseas media

- *German Media* (newspaper) visited the KH on Tuesday 13th April and seemed very impressed. Thanks to Wendy for bringing in her joey.
- *Asia Travel News* featured the KH in "Blue Skies Over PM".

Open Day: Easter Saturday

- Congratulations Robyne on a great day.
- A better microphone would be great for future events as people couldn't hear the announcements.

Helen Meers Media Co-ordinator



Ecology report



Attended council meeting 24/3/10 – nil to report.

NSW government has demanded a statewide standard **local environmental plan** (LEP). This plan is currently on display at council offices till 7/5/10. Proposed clause **7.4 (4) Core Koala Habitat...** states nothing about a comprehensive Koala plan of management; seems a missed opportunity. With standardising the current LEP, we need to check that koala habitat is zoned appropriately. I have asked Chris Rowland to investigate and possibly submit our concerns in this matter.

Tree cropping works Port Macquarie Airport. Food trees will be trimmed on a permanent basis at the airport for aircraft security reasons. Arranged a meeting with PMHC and airport staff which resulted in a positive outcome with our leaf collector Ross picking up the first lot of leaf from the airport area. We received permission to display a short KPS flier at the terminal for a period of three months alongside their tree lopping site plan and information. This has been on display since the start of the Easter school holidays. KPS in turn displayed their site plan at our open day.

Submitted a **short story of "Links VTR"** to Vickii Byram at *Port News*. It was printed in the *Express* on 30/3/10. Vickii is happy for us to send her further interesting stories for future editions.

Parking spaces in Grant Street. Two swamp mahogany trees are to be removed from the front of the netball courts to make room for more car parking. I asked PMHC to let us have the leaf, affirmative. PMHC rang 13/4/10, leaf was collected.

Carbon trading. I would like to suggest KPS consider purchasing land for tree planting. Australian Government is paying for trees to be planted. KPS could approach council and work out a plan whereby koala food tree removal would require a developer to pay KPS for tree planting on our site. See www.landcarecarbonsmart.com.au

Currently speaking to PMHC re allowing KPS to **plant trees** on community land.

PMHC had six **koala food trees removed** corner Hamlyn Drive and Granite Street this month. They were too close to a property and a couple of the trees were diseased. We have the OK from PMHC to replant a few trees on the site. Checked a dead koala food tree in front of 10 Hamlyn Drive, which had been struck by lightning. The owner is happy for us to replant another tree once PMHC has removed the dead one (when funds available).

Milicia McCosh Ecological Consultant

Society welcomes two new honorary members

Dr Stephen Phillips is a professional wildlife ecologist and former University lecturer in Ecology and Conservation Biology. He specialises in koala ecologist, having worked with the species since the 1970s. Steve is a founding committee member of what is now the NSW Koala Preservation Society. He is also a member of the **NSW Koala Recovery Team** and the Federal Government's working group examining the distribution and abundance of koalas throughout their remaining range in eastern Australia. Steve has published a number of scientific papers on koala ecology. In 1998, he became a laureate of the Smithsonian Institute.

He has recently developed landscape-scale assessment techniques to enable accurate delineation of koala populations. Steve advises councils throughout NSW, Qld and Victoria. He has also worked on a number of research projects with Dr Paul Canfield of Sydney University.

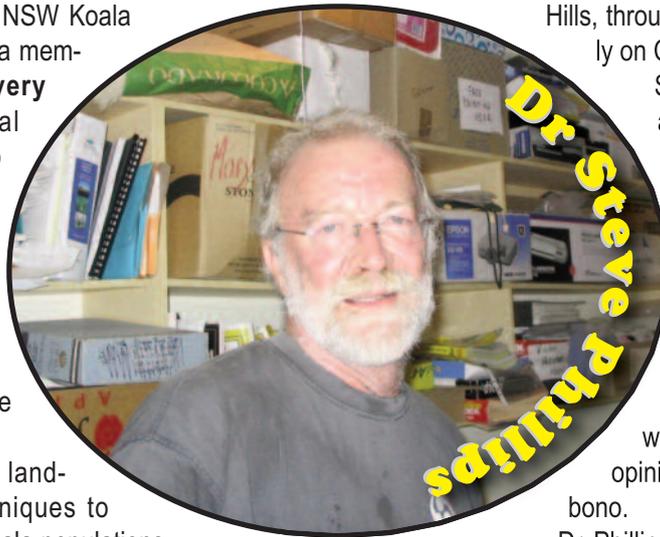
Steve has recently completed the **Koala Plan of**

Management for the Kempsey Shire Council, and prepared as similar plan for the Sovereign Hills project.

Steve has also done a number of koala research projects in Lake Innes, Charlie Bros land, Dunbogan, Bonny Hills, throughout Port Macquarie and recently on Comboyne Plateau.

Steve has been available for advice on a number of koala-related planning issues and was also one of the reviewers of the *Koala Hospital Rehabilitation Manual*. Steve also peer-reviewed a number of research proposals from the Universities of Newcastle and Sydney for the Koala Hospital, where we have needed an outside opinion. These have all been done pro bono.

Dr Phillips has also given the Hospital full use of his radio-tracking equipment at no cost, and has been instrumental in the recent RTA project of capturing and radio-collaring koalas affected by the Oxley Highway deviation.



Dr Chris Livingston of the Port Macquarie Veterinary Hospital has been the official veterinary superintendant of the Koala Hospital for 6 years, but has worked with us since 2000.

It is under the authority and guidance of Chris and his team that many of the developments in treatments at the Hospital in the last few years have been possible.

Chris has been supportive in our pushing the boundaries and raising the bar concerning what we can and can't do and has been really encouraging. At the same time – and this is just as important – he stands his ground if he thinks we are heading up the wrong track. He is very diplomatic when he could have really have done his block!

Chris will try new procedures with great success on koalas that, historically, we would have euthanased. A perfect example is the koala **Oxley Kaylee**, commonly known as "Tripod", who has only gone from strength to strength since her hind leg amputation after her stifle joint was in a total mess.



Another success has been the problematic issue of koalas suffering dislocated hip joints – these koalas don't normally respond well to having them put them back in – they often tend to pop out again. Chris has had great success with

femoral head excision where the head of the femur is literally removed and the koala builds up muscle around it and recovers well. **Newport Bridge Gloria** is a classic example of this – she is a koala living in the township for a number of years post-surgery. Apart from getting herself into some silly places, she has gained weight and is extremely fit. If Chris doesn't know the answer to a koala issue he will find out.

Apart from his love of wildlife, and being an excellent small animal vet (cats, dogs, etc), Chris is also a large animal vet working with horses and cattle (and has even had a camel or two out the back of the surgery!). Importantly, Chris also has a good sense of humour and always laughs at our crappy jokes!

Goodbye Tractive Golfer!

Recently we said goodbye to long-term patient, Tractive Golfer, who had been under treatment for scoliosis. Here's how two of our vollies remembered him...

"I just loved the way he always put on a show for the visitors – sprinting around his yard and then sitting quietly posing for the cameras (at least that's what I said he was doing).

On one occasion, while I was changing the leaf a couple of visitors watched him the whole time I was away. When I returned with fresh leaf I was told by them that "he must adore you as he never took his eyes off you". Of course, I knew it was the leaf he adored and not me, but still it made me feel great!!

Several times, I fed him his formula by sitting on the stool with Golfer sitting in front of me – another great photo op for the visitors.

I remember one morning, I was tying the towels on the gunyah while he was having his morning exercise around the yard. I turned around to see where he was and couldn't find him. It gave me a fright as I thought he must have escaped, but then discovered that he was sitting right beside me watching and waiting for his morning feed."

Marilyn



"I spent quite a number of mornings with good old Golfie. Soon as he heard the gate open he would look out for his formula. He would stick his head out as far as he could and put his claw up in the air to search out the syringe.

Most of all though, I remember his happy smacking sounds while he was being fed. Never mind the crowd that was always there to watch him and take heaps of photos.

Undisturbed by them, Golfie kept sculling down his "white gold". And like any committed worker, he never minded repeating his performance several times a day..."

Carla



Two boys called Zac

Highfield Zac was last admitted in the early hours of the morning after he had been spotted by a Security Guard in the industrial area limping along the footpath. His injury is an "old" one that he seems to have learned to live with.

Highfield Zac was named after Zac, Judy Brady's grandson, who is no stranger to koalas! Judy is one of our team leaders who has also cared for many orphan koala joeys in her home.

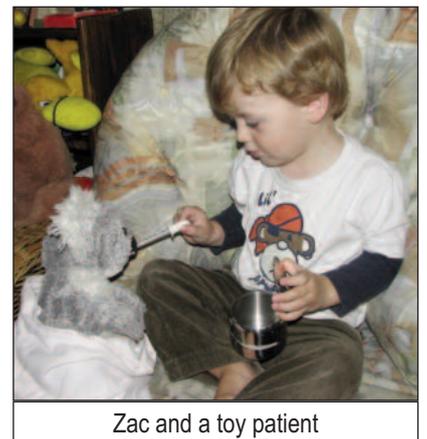
Like human babies, they need regular feeding and attention. Zac (the boy) has been exposed to koala rearing and treatment practically from birth, so Highfield Zac could have no better namesake!



Baby Zac watches Grandma Judy feed a joey.



Highfield Zac



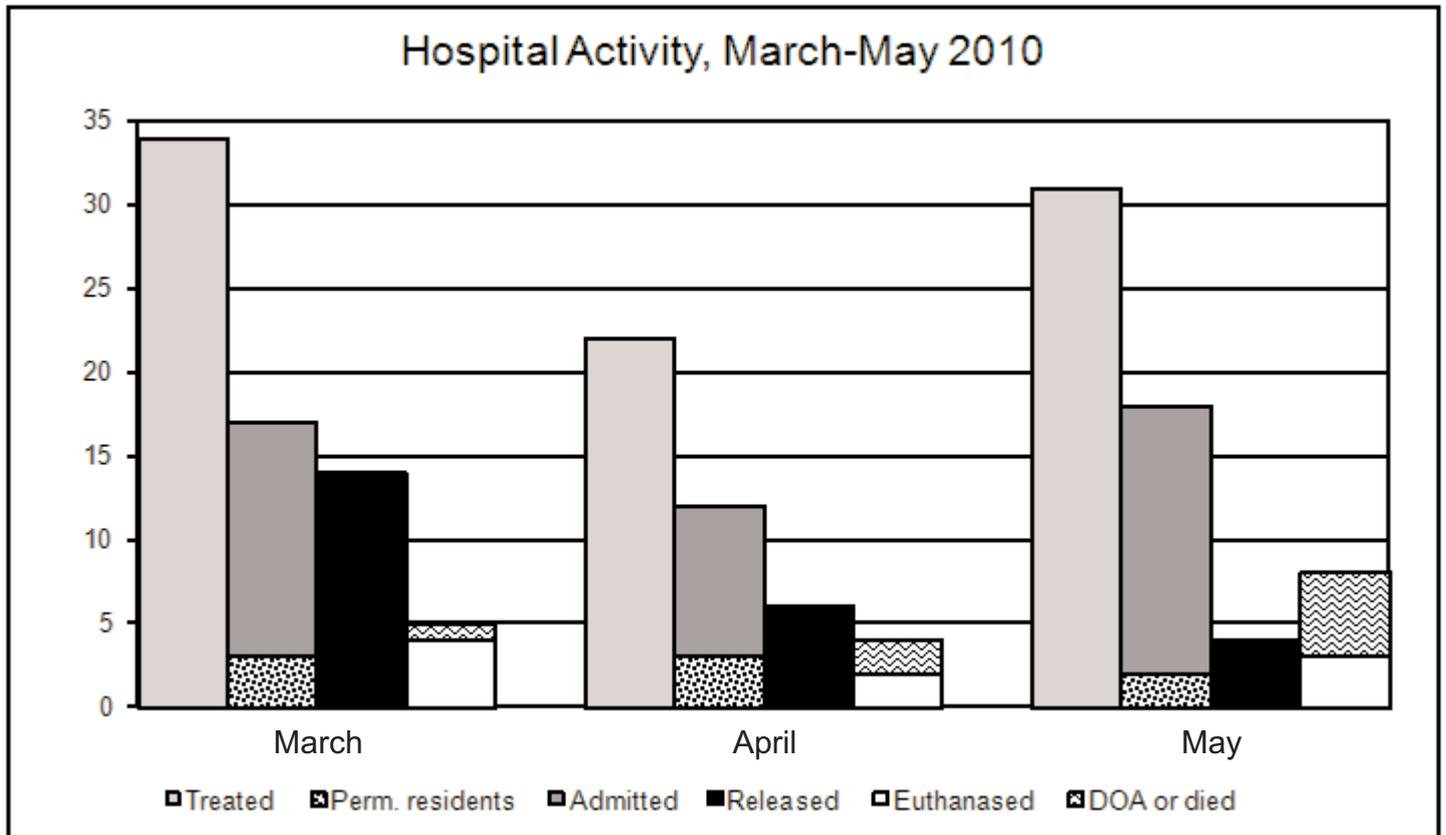
Zac and a toy patient

Hospital Activity Report



| Admission | Name | Reason | Result |
|-----------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 22.10.04 | Tractive Golfer M | Underweight – scoliosis of spine | Euthanased 06.05.10 |
| 11.07.08 | West Haven Barry M | Scoliosis of spine | Permanent resident |
| | Birthday Girl | Severe arthritis right hip | Permanent resident |
| 10.10.08 | Settlement Point Bea | Fell 20 metres from tree onto oyster rocks | |
| 23.08.09 | Seaview Farida F | Dog attack | Released 05.0.10 |
| 04.09.09 | T.A.F.E. Cody M Joey | Abandoned | Released 22.03.10 |
| 26.09.09 | Oxley H'way Kaylee | Hind leg injury | |
| 26.09.09 | Oxley Twinkle F | Joey of Oxley Kaylee | Released 12.03.10 |
| 23.20.09 | Oxley Matt M | Chlamydia | |
| 02.11.09 | Hastings Grace | In yard with two dogs | |
| 02.11.09 | Hastings Noah M | Joey of Hastings Grace | |
| 16.12.09 | Crescent Head Jimmy Joey | Mother killed MVA – home care | |
| 20.01.10 | Roto Mikki F Joey | Abandoned – home care | |
| 05.02.10 | WaterlilySweetPea F | Chlamydia | Released 02.04.10 |
| 17.02.10 | RTA 1 | Capture for re-location | Released 05.03.10 |
| 17.02.10 | RTA 2 | Capture for re-location | Released 05.03.10 |
| 22.02.10 | RTA 3 | Capture for re-location | Released 12.03.10 |
| 22.02.10 | Roto Bill M | Dog attack | Released 05.03.10 |
| 24.02.10 | Calwalla Kylie F | Chlamydia | Euthanased 23.03.10 |
| 26.02.10 | Waniora Jonah M | Chlamydia | Released 06.05.10 |
| 26.01.10 | RTA 4 | Capture for re-location | Released 12.03.10 |
| 27.02.10 | RTA 5 | Capture for re-location | Released 22.03.10 |
| 04.03.10 | Newport Bridge Gloria F | Sitting on ground - checked | Released 05.03.10 |
| 05.03.10 | RTA 6 | Capture for re-location | Euthanased 17.03.10 |
| 05.03.10 | RTA 7 | Capture for re-location | Released 22.03.10 |
| 07.03.10 | The Summit Growser M | Sitting low in tree | Released 07.03.10 |
| 10.03.10 | The Summit Growser M | On ground | Euthanased 11.03.10 |
| 10.03.10 | Macquarie Peter M | In yard with dogs - checked | Released 11.03.10 |
| 12.03.10 | Emerald Downs Barbara | Blind R Eye, limited vision L eye | |
| 18.03.10 | RTA 8 – M joey | Capture for relocation | Self Release 15.04.10 |
| 19.03.10 | Hamlyn Daniel M | Fall from tree – split lip | |
| 20.03.10 | Waugh Lord M | On ground – possible MVA | Euthanased 23.03.10 |
| 24.13.10 | Bellevue J.D. F | Abandoned joey – home care | |
| 26.03.10 | Oxley Carl M | On ground drinking water | |
| 28.03.10 | Blair Unlucky F | Found on ground | Dead on Arrival |
| 31.03.10 | Granite Lily F` | Motor vehicle accident | Released 09.04.10 |
| 03.04.10 | Banjora Kelly F | Sitting on ground | Euthanased 07.04.10 |
| 05.04.10 | Spindrift Jason M | Chlamydia | Euthanased 13.04.10 |
| 07.04.10 | Kennedy Marvin M | Dog attack | Released 16.04.10 |
| 11.04.10 | Ocean Mark M | Motor vehicle accident | Dead on Arrival |
| 12.04.10 | Hassall Ian | Conjunctivitis left eye | Released 17.04.10 |
| 17.04.10 | Horton Clarence M | Sitting low in tree | Released 20.04.10 |
| 18.04.10 | Lighthouse Angelique F | Possible chlamydia | Died 04.05.10 |
| 18.04.10 | Reading Nettie F | Possible dog attack | Released 20.04.10 |
| 28.04.10 | Grandview Milicia | Motor vehicle accident | Died 29.04.10 |
| 01.05.10 | Lake Innes Dianne F | Left and right eye conjunctivitis | Euthanased 11.05.10 |
| 01.05.10 | Reading Nettie F | In yard with dogs | Released 05.05.10 |
| 02.05.10 | Lake Lilly F | Conjunctivitis right eye | Euthanased 11.05.10 |

| Admission | Name | Reason | Result |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 03.05.10 | Barton Glen M | Left eye conjunctivitis | |
| 04.05.10 | Uralla Ellie F | Dog attack | Died 09.05.10 |
| 04.05.10 | Grandview Tri-Digit | Difficulty breathing – distended abdomen | Euthanased 04.05.10 |
| 06.05.10 | Pacific Sam M | Motor vehicle accident | Dead on Arrival |
| 12.05.10 | Kennedy Harris M | Motor vehicle accident | Released 21.05.10 |
| 15.05.10 | Kennedy Tristan M | Walking along busy road – observation | Released 18.05.10 |
| 19.05.10 | Moruya Ball F | Unknown | Dead on Arrival |
| 21.05.10 | Kennedy Tristan M | Fell from tree fighting with another male | Released 26.05.10 |
| 23.05.10 | Briarwood Crest M | Motor vehicle accident | Dead on Arrival |
| 23.05.10 | Bonny Hills Di F Joey | Abandoned – home care | |
| 28.05.10 | Lighthouse Noni F | Suspect chlamydia | |
| 28.05.10 | Lake Innes Luke M | Conjunctivitis right eye | |
| 30.05.10 | Amira Ruby F | Injured front right foot – poss. dog attack | |



Barbara Barrett

Thanks go to...

- **Hokubee Australia** tel 6586 1788
43-45 Commerce St, Wauchope
<http://www.hokubee.com.au/>
 - **Romer Locks** tel 6581 4470
Shop 1, 1 Blackbutt Rd, Port Macquarie
<http://www.romerlocks.com.au/>
- for their generous donations***

Donation Box Doings

Donation Box Rejuvenation Project

The effort to provide a more compact, modern and attractive donation box is now in full swing. Despite some hiccups, the third batch is presently being allocated and receiving donations.

The project could not have been the success it is without the invaluable assistance of tradesmen who volunteered in a most expansive manner to provide advice, sections for boxes, or completed special applications at either very little or no cost to the Koala Hospital. We express our very sincere thanks to the following:

- Wayne Cooper: **Binna Burra Custom Cabinets**
2/11 Jambali Road, Port Macquarie, 6581 2100
- George Coull: **GCV Services**
27 Burrawan Drive Wauchope, 6586 1031
- Kim Francis: **Francis Furniture**
3 Belah Rd. Port Macquarie, 6581 0176

We will be forever grateful.

What about the “Retired” Boxes?

There is still a decision to be made on the boxes with significance or historical value. Those that have seen better days are being destroyed, but a number have been retained in case they can be modified or recycled in the future.

Geoff Best, our Education Coordinator, has been journeying to various venues to spread the word about Koala Hospital activities to numbers of community groups in the area. When these groups conduct their social meetings there is often a collection taken up to assist us. The amount collected is withheld until there are sufficient funds to adopt a Wild Koala. To assist this type of collecting activity, groups are provided with a special donation box, recycled from retired and renovated boxes.

Guardians

The numbers of Donation Box Guardians continue to grow, they are playing their part in encouraging contributions to our cause from locals and visiting tourists.



Retired donation boxes in the Koala Hospital yard

In this issue we wish to extend a welcome, thanks and good wishes to a number of newcomers to the ranks of Guardians:

- **Boost Juice Bar** 6584 5933
Shop 55, Port Central, Port Macquarie
- **Butlin's Barber Shop** 6584 4251
Shop 9, 109 William Street, Port Macquarie
- **Clifton Butchery** 6583 3984
5 Clifton Drive, Port Macquarie
- **Gourmet Affair** 6559 6588
61 Bold Street, Laurieton
- **Home Timber & Hardware** 6581 2777
5 Barton Crescent, Port Macquarie
- **Little Brewing Company** 6581 3949
Unit 1, 58 Uralla Road, Port Macquarie
- **Port Central Newsagency** 6584 2288
Shop 1, Port Central, Port Macquarie
- **Port Euro Express** 6582 1806
Shop 7, Lighthouse Plaza, Port Macquarie
- **Red Iguana** 6583 2397
Shop 13, Colonial Arcade, Port Macquarie
- **Video Ezy** 6584 0509
130 Gordon Street, Port Macquarie

Brian Crisp Donation Box Co-ordinator

adopt
Bonny Ash



www.koalahospital.org.au/adopt/

2010 Calendar

| | |
|------------|--------------------|
| 18 June 10 | Management Meeting |
| 16 July 10 | Management Meeting |
| 15 Aug 10 | GM 3rd Sunday 10am |
| 20 Aug 10 | Management Meeting |
| 7 Sept 10 | <i>Gum Tips</i> |
| 2 Oct 10 | Family Fun Day 9am |
| 21 Nov 10 | GM 3rd Sunday 10am |
| 7 Dec 10 | <i>Gum Tips</i> |

Volunteers needed

- Tree planters: call **Milicia** 0417 541130
- Walk and talker: call **Geoff** 6584 1522
- Kiosk staff: call **Hazell** 6584 1522



New Members

February - March - April

Kelli Barham
Ros Bayly
Kipley Brown
Patsy Crabbe
Alvina Dark
Tracey Doney
Clive Ferris
Emma Gifford
Thomas Kelly
Poon Lawrence

Steven McAuliffe
Kristen Moore
Jacque Newman
Donna Polkinghorne
Ashlee Schwass
Joni Suchat
J&M Trevillian
Melissa Voyias
Margery White
Sabine Zanetti

Koala Hospital WORLDWIDE WEBSITES

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Netherlands – Carla Sluiter | http://www.koalaziekenhuis.nl/ |
| Germany – Lutz Michel | http://www.koalahilfe.de |
| Liechtenstein – Viktor | http://www.koala.li |
| Switzerland – Viktor | http://www.koalahilfe.ch |
| Europe – Viktor | http://www.koalahilfe.eu |
| Australia! | http://www.koalahospital.org.au |

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PO Box 236, Port Macquarie NSW 2444 AUSTRALIA.

Telephone: **(02) 6584 1522** Fax: (02) 6584 2399
Email: info@koalahospital.org.au Web: www.koalahospital.org.au

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
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| Ecology | Milicia McCosh | ecological.consultant@koalahospital.org.au |
| IT | Sam Carroll | techie@koalahospital.org.au |
| Supervisor | Cheyne Flanagan | supervisor@koalahospital.org.au |
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| Secretary | Hazell Sellers | secretary@koalahospital.org.au |
| Treasurer | Herbie King | treasurer@koalahospital.org.au |
| Vice President | John Barber | vicepresident@koalahospital.org.au |
| Co-ordinators | | |
| Education | Geoff Best | education@koalahospital.org.au |
| Friends | Robyne Leadbeatter | friends@koalahospital.org.au |
| Hospital | Peter Schulties | coordinator@koalahospital.org.au |
| Habitat | Chris Rowlands | habitat@koalahospital.org.au |
| Media | Helen Meers | media@koalahospital.org.au |
| Maintenance | Brian Westoby | maintenance@koalahospital.org.au |
| Souvenir Kiosk | Hazell Sellers | kiosk@koalahospital.org.au |

Gum Tips

Gum Tips, the official newsletter of the Koala Preservation Society of NSW Inc., is published quarterly.



Editor:
Samantha Carroll
techie@koalahospital.org.au

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